

Florida Superfog Causes 70-car pile-up

Fact Sheet

Event date: January 9, 2008

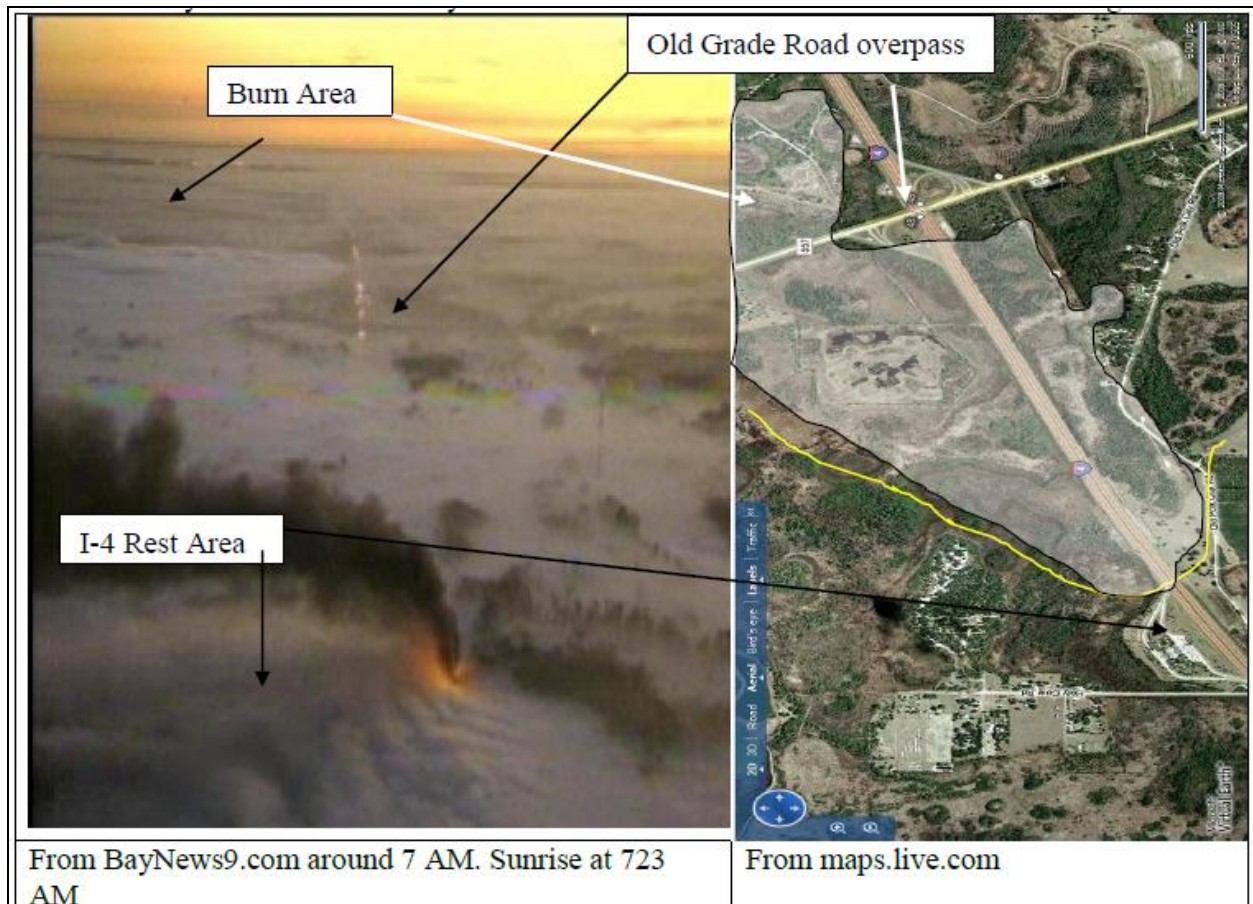


Figure 1. Dense superfog covered a section of Interstate-4 that led to a 70 car pile-up.

Summary of event: Extremely dense superfog (a combination of smoke and fog) crept over the highway during the early morning hours of January 9, 2009 and caused drivers to encounter blinding conditions. 70 vehicles collided, resulting in 5 deaths and 38 injuries, which ranks this accident second in the country in terms of fog related deaths, and sixth in the country in terms of fog related injuries. The accident occurred in an area where a prescribed burn had turned into a wildfire the day before. This provided ample condensation nuclei on which fog could form overnight. A very stable environment with light winds meant that the smoke would sit in the area overnight, with no means of dispersion. This very dense fog meant that drivers encountered a blinding wall of smoke and fog, that some described as so bad that they could not see their hands in front of their faces.



Figure 1. Combination superfog in the area of the accident.



Figure 2. Video still of the accident; headlights not visible once the cars enter the superfog strata.

Links for more information: <http://www.weathercenter.usf.edu/jcollins/05609AGCfinal.pdf>

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